

Medical School

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A FEW days ago there appeared in our columns a detailed account of the recent improvements that have been made in the buildings and appliances at the University. These were necessitated by the establishment of the recently formed Medical School. The study of medicine is of such a character that it cannot be carried on unless the school be furnished with lecture-rooms which are especially adapted for the purpose. The liberal endowments of Sir Thos. Elder and of Mr. Angas enabled the council to obtain professors of some of the requisite subjects for study, but did not provide for any buildings. The council in its anxiety to make use of these endowments entered upon the difficult task of adapting the existing buildings to the purposes of medical tuition. The three professors had to be furnished with the necessary appliances, and as no extra money was at the disposal of the council it had to set to work with caution and extreme care. The Angas Professor of Chemistry had no reason to complain, for the splendid laboratory only needed fitting up to make it all that could be desired. This was done, and the professor is housed in such a way as to make his laboratory a model institution of the kind. To enable the Professor of Anatomy to pursue his unique and uncanny demonstrations, the old powder magazine was remodelled and enlarged. A small and neat dissecting-room was erected close by, and attached thereto a private room for the professor. It is to be doubted if a more compact and useful and convenient place for its size could have been designed even if the council had had an unlimited purse to draw upon. The lecturer on physiology was not so fortunate. He was consigned with his instruments and microscopes to a dungeon chamber in the basement with one window facing the north, through which poured a merciless stream of blazing sunlight, utterly destructive of all good work, and for his lectures had to make shift with the lecture theatre of the

mathematical department. It was necessary that some change should be made. A new building was needed which would provide him with a proper physiological laboratory and lecture-room. A new wing has been erected at the rear of the university premises, which has been placed in such a position as not to interfere with any more elaborate and ornate additions which may be made at some future date to the pile of buildings. In its arrangements it is a model for comfort, convenience, and practical utility; and if, when a large central hall is erected in front of it, it be hidden from view it will still be as available as at present.

The education of a medical man is so varied and so complex that it is deemed requisite in nearly all schools that five years instead of three should be given to study before he can obtain his M.B. degree. The public demand, quite rightly, that those who are entrusted with the care of life and limb should be properly qualified for their honorable social position, and should not be mere tyros or charlatans who have acquired that "little knowledge" which is proverbially a dangerous thing not only for themselves but for their patients or their victims. No one would like to see any government or university sanctioning a low standard for its medical practitioners. In England the Medical Council have adopted the practical principle that in order to ensure efficiency in the tuition of students no certificate can be given by any one teacher for instruction in more than one subject. If, then, our students were to be placed in a fair position in

relation to British schools of medicine it was requisite that as many separate lecturers should be appointed as there were subjects to be lectured upon. Acting on this principle the council, with the means at its disposal, determined to make complete arrangements for the first two years of a student's life. It would have done more, but was unable for want of means. It appointed Dr. Rennie, Dr. Watson, and Dr. Stirling to take charge of those fundamental subjects which precede the strictly professional part of a physician's education, viz., chemistry, anatomy, and physiology. It provided the requisite buildings, and then opened the school, which has been thus far successful beyond all expectations.

The school was opened last year. The two years' attendance required of the first batch of students will expire at the end of this year. If no further arrangement is made these young men will have to go further afield to gain their degrees and their qualification to practise. The drudgery of the first years of their training will be all that falls to the lot of our University, while the honor of putting the topstone upon the edifice of their education will belong to Melbourne, or Edinburgh, or London. To go to another country for this purpose will entail expense, inconvenience, and loss of time, while on the part of our own University it is a confession of weakness or inability which it is humiliating to have to make. All the conditions except one for completing the curriculum are at hand. There is a large hospital close by, in which sufficient variety of diseases are treated, and especially of those peculiar to this colony, to give the requisite clinical teaching. The medical men of this city have a deserved reputation not only for practical skill but for scientific enthusiasm, and out of their number could be found as able teachers on surgery, obstetrics, therapeutics, medical jurisprudence, and other subjects, as could be desired. No more buildings, we are told, would be required, at all events for some time, for the new lecturers could do their work in the existing premises. Under these circumstances it is a satisfaction to find that the council is

earnestly bestirring itself to find out some means by which it can arrange for the completion of the medical course. The only remaining difficulty is money. If the additional instruction were entrusted to a staff of "professors" the cost would be enormous, for as a professor is debarred from private practice, and must be paid a salary commensurate with his ability, it would require a heavy endowment to provide the requisite resources. No such difficulty would arise if the work were undertaken by "lecturers" who are selected for certain work and paid accordingly. A lecturer who is in an extensive private practice has also certain advantages over any professor, which may make his instruction all the more valuable. The cost of providing a staff of lecturers sufficiently numerous to overtake the work would be about £1,200 per year, a portion of which would of course be refunded by students' fees. This does not seem a large amount to raise for so worthy an object, and it is to be hoped that the council will see its way to prevent the disaster and the dishonor which would be involved in disbanding our first band of medical students at the end of their second year. We appeal to others of our wealthy fellow-colonists to follow the example of those whose names are already im-